

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4612

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 4891

FOR EA-ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, XC, US, TW

SUBJECT: U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN TAIWAN

REF: (A) STATE 172357, (B) TAIPEI 4864

1. SUBSEQUENT TO RECEIPT YOUR REFTEL, BILL AYERS HAS TAKEN A NEW, TOUGH LOOK AT ROC COUNTRY PLAN AND, AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH DCM AND MYSELF, HAS SUBMITTED HIS THINKING ON THIS SUBJECT IN REFTEL B. IN MY VIEW, THE MOST SIGNIFICANT LANGUAGE IN THE PLAN IS THAT WHICH REFERS TO PROMOTING "ACCEPTANCE THAT OUR POLICY OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE PRC WILL BE UNDERTAKEN WITH A PRUDENT REGARD FOR THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE ON TAIWAN, AND THAT THE BASIC THRUST OF THIS POLICY HAS BROAD-BASED SUPPORT WITHIN THE U.S." IF WE CAN SELL THAT IDEA TO THE LEADERSHIP ON TAIWAN AS WELL AS THE READING AND LISTENING PUBLIC WE MAY LARGELY ALLAY WHAT WILL OTHERWISE BE DANGEROUS, MOUNTING APPREHENSIONS. MOREOVER, PREMIER CHIANG AND HIS LIEUTENANTS WHO WILL WANT TO GUIDE TAIWAN SAFELY THROUGH NORMALIZATION STORM WILL BE CONSIDERABLY ASSISTED IF PEOPLE HERE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE U.S. PLAYING WHAT THEY WOULD REGARD AS A RESPONSIBLE ROLE. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, OF COURSE, OUR DECISIONS AND ACTIONS WILL SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. THE SOONER WE HAVE AUTHORITATIVE WORD TO TRANSMIT THE EASIER IT WILL

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BE TO PORTRAY OUR POLICY AS MEETING TAIWAN'S BASIC CONCERNS.

2. IN GENERAL, AND ALSO FOR REASONS JUST MENTIONED, WE HAVE TO USE USIS AND OUR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY HERE IN THE MONTHS AHEAD TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND STABILITY AND THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF THE ECONOMY. THE ANXIETIES THAT NORMALIZATION GENERATES

MUST BE REDUCED AND AS FAR AS POSSIBLE REMOVED AND CONFIDENCE MUST BE NURTURED IN TAIWAN'S CAPABILITY TO FUNCTION SMOOTHLY AND EFFECTIVELY IN THE POST-NORMALIZATION SITUATION. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS WILL PLAY A UNIQUELY IMPORTANT ROLE AND MAY SPELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SMOOTH SAILING AND A TAIWAN EXPOSED TO THE DANGERS OF ECONOMIC DISLOCATIONS AND OF INTERNAL DISSENSION STEMMING FROM FEELINGS OF PERSONAL AND NATIONAL INSECURITY. THIS DOES NOT CALL FOR A NEW COUNTRY PLAN BUT RATHER A JUDICIOUS USING OF ALL THE ASSETS AND PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO US WITH A HEIGHTENED CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SPECIAL ROLE THEY HAVE TO PLAY.

3. BECAUSE OF THE ANTICIPATED CHANGES OVER THE COMING MONTHS IT DOES NOT SEEM TO ME USEFUL TO TRY TO DEVELOP A NEW OR FUNDAMENTALLY REVISED COUNTRY PLAN AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, A NEW PLAN MAY VERY WELL BE IN ORDER SOMEWHERE DOWN THE ROAD WHEN THE SHAPE OF THE FUTURE IS BETTER PERCEIVED AND THE PROBLEMS TO BE FACED HAVE TAKEN ON NEW FORMS. IT SEEMS MUCH TOO EARLY, HOWEVER, TO TRY TO ANTICIPATE NOW WHAT THE NATURE OF THE NEW PROGRAM SHOULD BE.
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